

**REPORT ON**  
**THE 2015 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**  
**FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8**  
**FOR THE**  
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION	Page 1
SURVEY PROCESS	Page 1
ANALYSIS OF DATA	Page 1
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS	Page 2
· SAFETY	Page 3
· VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS	Page 4
· SUICIDE	Page 5
· TOBACCO USE	Page 6
· ALCOHOL USE	Page 7
· ILLEGAL DRUG USE	Page 8
· HIV/AIDS EDUCATION	Page 9
· SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	Page 10
· DIETARY BEHAVIOR	Page 11
· SELF IMAGE AND STRESS	Page 12
· PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	Page 13
APPENDIX	Page 14

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Arlington Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to carry out the tabulation and an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which had been implemented with students in grades 6 through 8. This survey was based on one developed specifically for middle school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 96 questions. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, illegal drug use, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, body weight, self-image, and physical activity.

## **SURVEY PROCESS**

It was agreed that the survey would be administered to all students in attendance from grades 6, 7, and 8 on the agreed upon date. The survey was administered simultaneously at 8 a.m. to all students on June 10, 2015 by professional staff. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and given the option to exempt their child from the survey. Fewer than ten students were withheld at parental request. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to all students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 1,033 students who responded to the survey, 366 from grade 6, 322 from grade 7, and 340 from grade 8. There were 552 females and 477 males who responded to the survey. Five students did not indicate their grade, and four students did not indicate their gender.

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey, and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender, and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented in percentages under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent, and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

## **OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from the Arlington Public Schools. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group, and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 96 questions, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results, to offer comparisons by grade and gender, as well as comparisons with the results of the Arlington YRBS which was completed in June of 2013. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the Arlington Public Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

It should be noted that some of the questions in the current survey were not asked in 2013 and the wording of other questions and/or responses has changed. As a result, in those cases comparisons to the results of 2013 and before cannot be drawn.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6, 7, 8**

**SAFETY**

- **2.3%** of all respondents (2.6% - 2013) **report “not at all” or “hardly ever” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car** (grade 6 – 0.9%, grade 7 – 1.8%, and grade 8 – 3.9%). There was no variation by gender.
- **More than one respondent in six (18.8%)** (19.5% - 2013) **reports that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 11.8%, grade 7 – 18.3%, grade 8 – 26.8%). Males (22.5%) were more likely to not wear a bicycle helmet than were females (15.9%).
- **One respondent in eight (12.3%)** (10.3% - 2013) **reports having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol at least once during the prior thirty days.** There was very little variation by grade or gender.
- **17.1%** of all respondents (17.7% - 2013) **report having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication of any kind during the previous twelve months.** The incidence of this experience increased by grade (grade 6 – 15.9%, grade 7 – 17.1%, and grade 8 – 18.6%). Females (21.1%) report this experience much more frequently than males (12.6%). Further, 6.0% of all respondents (6.3% - 2013) report doing so to someone else.
- **6.0%** of all respondents (5.7% - 2013) **report having ever gone to meet someone they met over the internet that they never knew before.** The incidence of doing so was highest among 8<sup>th</sup> graders (grade 6 – 4.6%, grade 7 – 5.2%, grade 8 – 8.1%) and males (females – 5.0%, males – 7.2%).

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **2.5%** of all respondents (1.6% - 2013) **report having ever carried a gun (other than supervised shooting or hunting). There was very little variation by grade or gender.**
- **3.4%** of all respondents (2.6% - 2013) **report having ever carried any type of weapon such as a gun, knife, or club to school during the school day.** Further, 2.2% of all respondents (1.2% - 2013) report doing so during the previous 30 days.

**“Have you ever carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club to school during the school day?”**

**“Yes”**

	<u><b>Female</b></u>	<u><b>Male</b></u>	<u><b>Total</b></u>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	2.1%	1.7%	1.9%
<b>7</b>	3.1%	4.4%	3.8%
<b>8</b>	3.1%	6.4%	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	2.9%	4.0%	3.4%

- **30.3%** of all respondents (34.7% - 2013) **report having had their property stolen or deliberately damaged on school property during the school day on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey.** The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 7 (grade 6 – 28.0%, grade 7 – 37.2%, grade 8 – 25.9%) and among males (females – 28.1%, males – 32.8%).
- **14.3%** of all respondents (17.1% - 2013) **report having been threatened, humiliated or experienced hostile behaviors from others on their way to or from school during the previous twelve months.** Further, **nearly one-fifth (19.0%)** of all respondents (23.6% - 2013) **report having had this experience on school property during the school day.** The experience of being bullied during the school day in the previous twelve months was highest among respondents from grade 7 (grade 6 – 15.6%, grade 7 – 22.7%, grade 8 – 19.5%) and among females (females – 20.3%, males – 17.4%). Additionally, **4.1%** (4.6% - 2013) **report doing so to others on the way to or from school** and **4.9%** (6.6% - 2013) **report doing so to others during the school day.**
- **One respondent in eight (12.4%)** (10.9% - 2013) **reports having ever hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises)** (grade 6 – 9.0%, grade 7 – 12.5%, grade 8 – 16.0%). Female respondents (18.2%) report such self-injury three times as often as males (5.7%).

SUICIDE

- **15.2%** of all respondents (12.4% - 2013) **report having ever seriously thought about committing suicide** and **6.3%** (5.8% - 2013) **report having ever made a plan to do so**. The incidence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 10.2%, grade 7 – 14.4%, grade 8 – 21.4%). Female respondents (19.5%) report having done so more frequently than males (10.1%).
- **4.8%** of all respondents (4.7% - 2013) **report having ever tried to commit suicide**.

**“Have you ever tried to kill yourself?”**

**“Yes”**

	<b><u>Female</u></b>	<b><u>Male</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	5.8%	2.9%	4.4%
<b>7</b>	4.3%	3.2%	3.8%
<b>8</b>	8.8%	2.8%	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	6.4%	3.0%	4.8%
<b>2013</b>	5.4%	4.0%	4.7%

TOBACCO USE

- **5.8%** of all respondents (4.5% - 2013) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking** (even just a puff) and **4.0%** of all respondents **report having done so for the first time before the age of 12.** There was little variation by grade. Males (6.7%) were slightly more likely to have ever done so than were females (4.9%).
- **3.1%** of all respondents (1.1% - 2013) **report having smoked part or all of a cigarette on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** There was little variation by grade or gender.
- **97.7%** of all respondents (97.0% - 2013) **report that their parents would feel it would be “wrong” or “very wrong” for them to smoke cigarettes.** There was no variation by grade or gender in this perception.
- **4.9%** of all respondents **report having ever tried or used an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette)** (grade 6 – 2.5%, grade 7 – 3.7%, grade 8 – 8.3%). Male respondents (6.1%) report ever smoking an e-cigarette slightly more frequently than females (3.8%). Further, 2.8% report doing so during the previous 30 days.



ALCOHOL USE

- **76.7%** of all respondents (82.5% - 2013) **report having never had a drink of alcohol, other than a sip and/or other than for religious reasons** (grade 6 – 84.0%, grade 7 – 73.8%, grade 8 – 72.2%). Further, 13.0% of all respondents (11.3% - 2013) report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 12.
- **5.3%** of all respondents (4.1% - 2013) **report having had a drink of alcohol at least once during the previous thirty days**. The incidence of recent alcohol use was lowest in grade 6 (grade 6 – 2.7%, grade 7 – 6.9%, grade 8 – 6.2%). There was no variation by gender.
- **3.6%** of all respondents (3.7% - 2013) **report having ever been drunk** (grade 6 – 0.9%, grade 7 – 4.4%, grade 8 – 5.7%). There was little variation by gender.
- **7.7%** of all respondents (4.4% - 2013) **report having attended parties held in homes in their town where alcohol use by teens is allowed, either occasionally or frequently** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 5.2%, grade 7 – 7.5%, grade 8 – 10.1%). There was very little variation by gender.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 9% believed that over half of their peers had done so and another 18% (total 27%) believed that more than one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, 5% of all respondents actually report having used alcohol during the previous month.**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **5.5%** of all respondents (5.0% - 2013) **report having ever used marijuana**. 8<sup>th</sup> grade respondents (9.9%) were much more likely to have done so than were those from grade 6 (2.2%) or grade 7 (4.7%) (females – 4.8%, males – 6.1%). Further, 2.0% of all respondents (2.0% - 2013) report having first done so before the age of 12, and 2.7% (1.6% - 2013) report using marijuana during the previous month.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 11% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so.** In fact, **2.7%** of all respondents actually **report having used marijuana during the previous month**.
- **7.7%** of all respondents (6.2% - 2013) **report having ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high.** There was little variation by gender.

**“Have you ever sniffed glue, gasoline, or breathed the contents of spray cans or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?”**

<b>“Yes”</b>			
	<b><u>Female</u></b>	<b><u>Male</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b>Grade</b>			
<b>6</b>	6.3%	5.8%	6.1%
<b>7</b>	3.7%	13.2%	8.4%
<b>8</b>	10.3%	5.8%	8.7%
<b>Total</b>	6.9%	8.3%	7.7%
<b>2013</b>	5.8%	6.7%	6.2%

- **10.0%** of all respondents (12.5% - 2013) **report that there is someone in their family whose drinking or drug use bothers them.**
- **3.9%** of all respondents (3.3% - 2013) **report having ever been sold or offered drugs on school property.** The incidence of this experience increased slightly each year by grade (grade 6 – 2.2%, grade 7 – 3.5%, grade 8 – 6.3%). There was no variation by gender.

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **More than half (53.0%) (55.0% - 2013) of all respondents report that they have not spoken with their parents or other adults in their family about sexuality or ways to prevent HIV infection, other STDs, or pregnancy during the twelve months prior to the survey.** The incidence of this experience decreased each year by grade (grade 6 – 66.7%, grade 7 – 48.4%, grade 8 – 42.6%) and was slightly higher among males (females – 51.1%, males – 55.3%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **3.5%** of all respondents (2.9% - 2013, grades 7 and 8 only) **report having ever had sexual intercourse** (grade 6 – 1.4%, grade 7 – 2.8%, grade 8 – 5.7%). There was no variation by gender.
- **5.6%** of all respondents (6.2% - 2013) **report having ever participated in oral sex either given or received** (grade 6 – 0.9%, grade 7 – 5.3%, grade 8 – 10.2%). There was no variation by gender.
- **3.7%** of all respondents (3.4% - 2013) **report that they have ever been involved in sexual intercourse or sexual touching against their will** (grade 6 – 1.9%, grade 7 – 2.2%, grade 8 – 7.3%). This experience was higher among female respondents (females – 5.0%, males – 2.4%).
- **44.8%** of all respondents (37.4% - 2013) **report that they have never talked about sex with their parents/guardians or other adults in their family**. The incidence of this experience decreased each year by grade (grade 6 – 55.0%, grade 7 – 42.8%, grade 8 – 35.9%) and was higher among males (females – 42.5%, males – 47.8%).
- **8.9%** of all respondents (7.8% - 2013) **report having sent or received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”)** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 3.3%, grade 7 – 7.5%, grade 8 – 16.1%), and was slightly higher among females (females – 10.0%, males – 7.5%).

## DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- **12.7%** of all respondents (12.2% - 2013) **report that they are concerned about their weight either “most of the time” or “always”**. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 8 (grade 6 – 10.0%, grade 7 – 10.4%, grade 8 – 17.8%). Female respondents (18.0%) report this concern much more frequently than males (6.5%).
- **6.8%** of all respondents (6.9% - 2013) **report having ever vomited, starved themselves, taken laxatives, diet drinks, or pills to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 3.7%, grade 7 – 6.7%, grade 8 – 10.3%) and was much higher among females (females – 11.5%, males – 1.3%).
- During the seven days prior to the survey:
  - **5.9%** of all respondents (8.7% - 2013) **report having had a drink of soda (not diet), flavored punch, sports drinks, sweetened iced-tea, or other fruit-flavored drinks at least once a day**.
  - **52.6%** of all respondents (49.7% - 2013) **report having eaten fresh fruit at least once a day**.
  - **18.0%** of all respondents (22.6% - 2013) **report having had a drink of 100% fruit juice at least once a day**.
- **One-fifth (22.9%)** of all respondents (21.3% - 2013) **report eating breakfast on fewer than five days during the week before the survey**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 14.4%, grade 7 – 23.0%, grade 8 – 31.3%) and was higher among females (females – 24.7%, males – 20.0%).
- **Over one-third (38.8%)** of all respondents (42.9% - 2013) **report that they have at least one drink containing caffeine on an average school day**. The incidence in behavior was lowest in grade 6 (grade 6 – 26.1%, grade 7 – 46.5%, grade 8 – 45.1%). There was little variation by gender.

SELF-IMAGE AND STRESS

- **5.2%** of all respondents (5.5% - 2013) **report that they fit in with people their own age either “not at all” or “hardly ever”** (grade 6 – 2.8%, grade 7 – 6.1%, grade 8 – 7.0%). Female respondents (6.9%) report this perception more frequently than males (3.3%).
- **9.5%** of all respondents (8.5% - 2013) **report that they worry that they are not good at anything either “most of the time” or “always”**. Respondents from grade 8 report this perception most often (grade 6 – 8.3%, grade 7 – 7.7%, grade 8 – 12.2%) and female respondents (12.6%) do so more frequently than males (6.1%).
- **One-quarter (25.9%)** of all respondents (23.9% - 2013) **report that they are under too much stress or pressure either “most of the time” or “always”**. This perception increased each year by grade (grade 6 – 18.9%, grade 7 – 22.1%, grade 8 – 37.0%) (females – 35.2%, males – 15.3%). Further, respondents **report that the sources of the greatest amount of pressure in their lives are: teachers (30.0%), myself (28.4%), and parents/guardians (13.9%)**.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **82.6%** of all respondents (83.9% - 2013) **report having exercised or participated in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made them sweat and breathe hard on at least three occasions during the seven days prior to the survey.** The incidence of such regular exercise decreased each year by grade (grade 6 – 84.7%, grade 7 – 83.5%, grade 8 – 78.7%) and was higher among male respondents (females – 79.2%, males – 85.9%).
- **47.3%** of all respondents (52.0% - 2013) **report that they do not think that there are enough games and activities offered through the school activities program to meet their needs and interest** (grade 6 – 43.1%, grade 7 – 47.2%, grade 8 – 52.3%). Female respondents (50.9%) report this perception more than males (43.4%).
- **Over one-third (38.9%)** of all respondents (36.6% - 2013) **report that they get seven hours or less of sleep on an average school night.** The incidence of this behavior increased dramatically each year by grade (grade 6 – 23.3%, grade 7 – 39.8%, grade 8 – 54.7%) and was higher among females (females – 43.1%, males – 34.0%).

**APPENDIX**

**TO THE REPORT ON THE**

**2015 MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

**FOR THE**

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**SELECTED COMPARISONS**

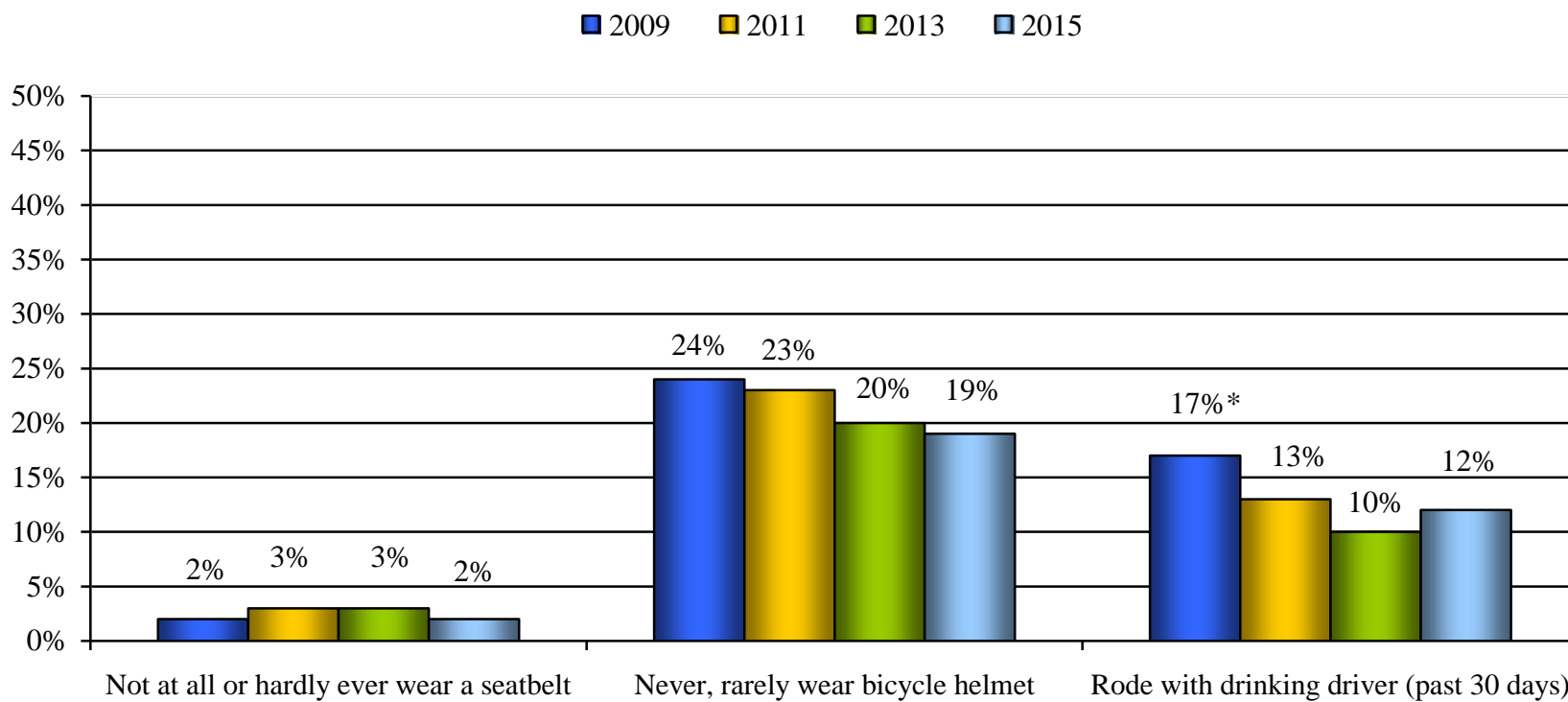
**2009, 2011, 2013, AND 2015**

**FOR GRADES 6, 7 AND 8**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

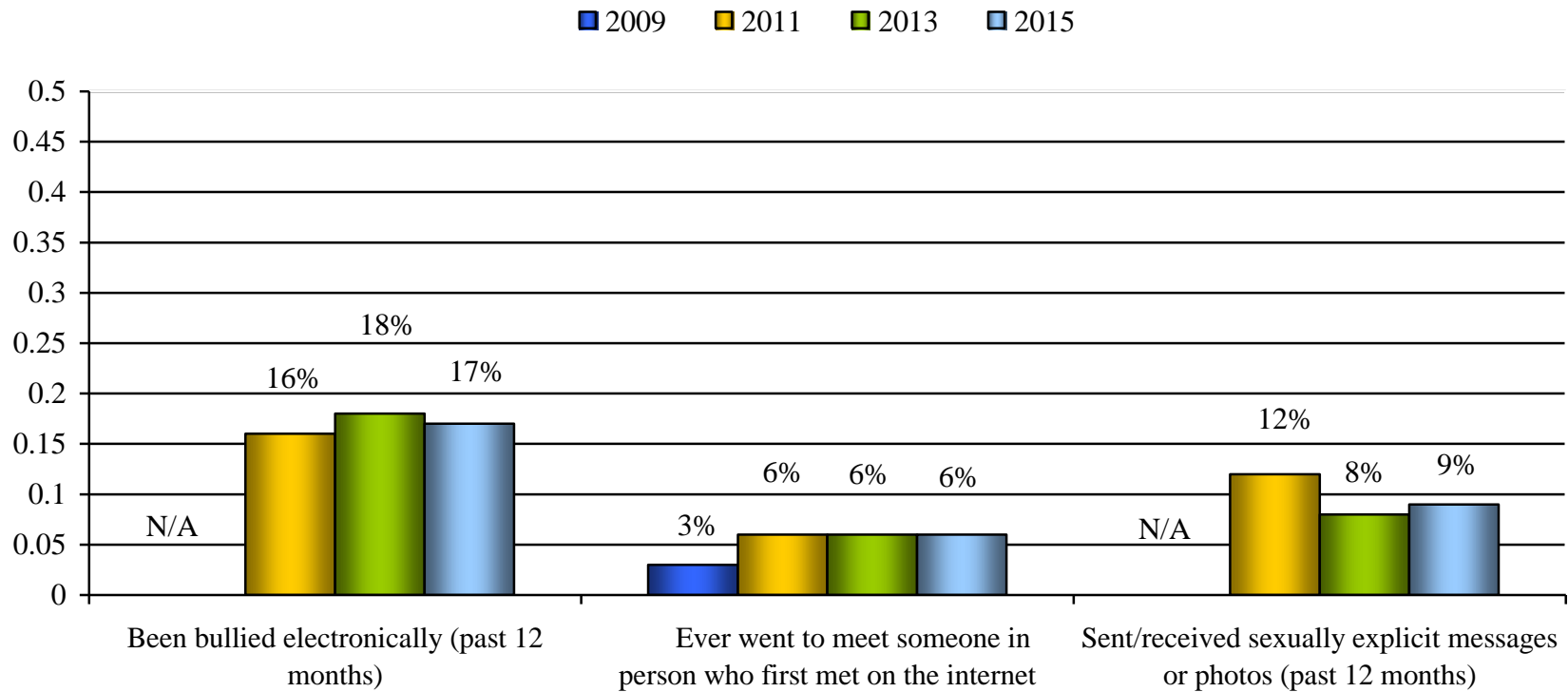
**SAFETY**



\* lifetime

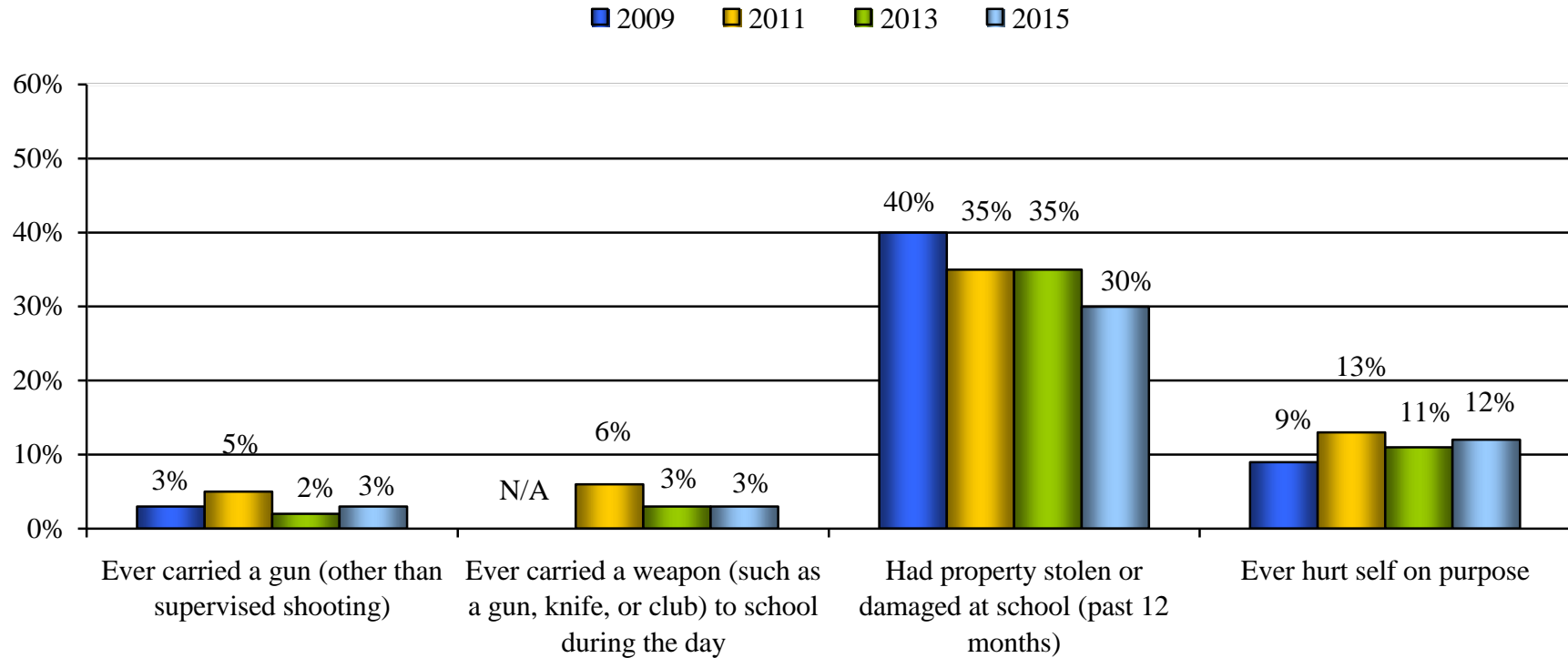
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2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**INTERNET SAFETY**



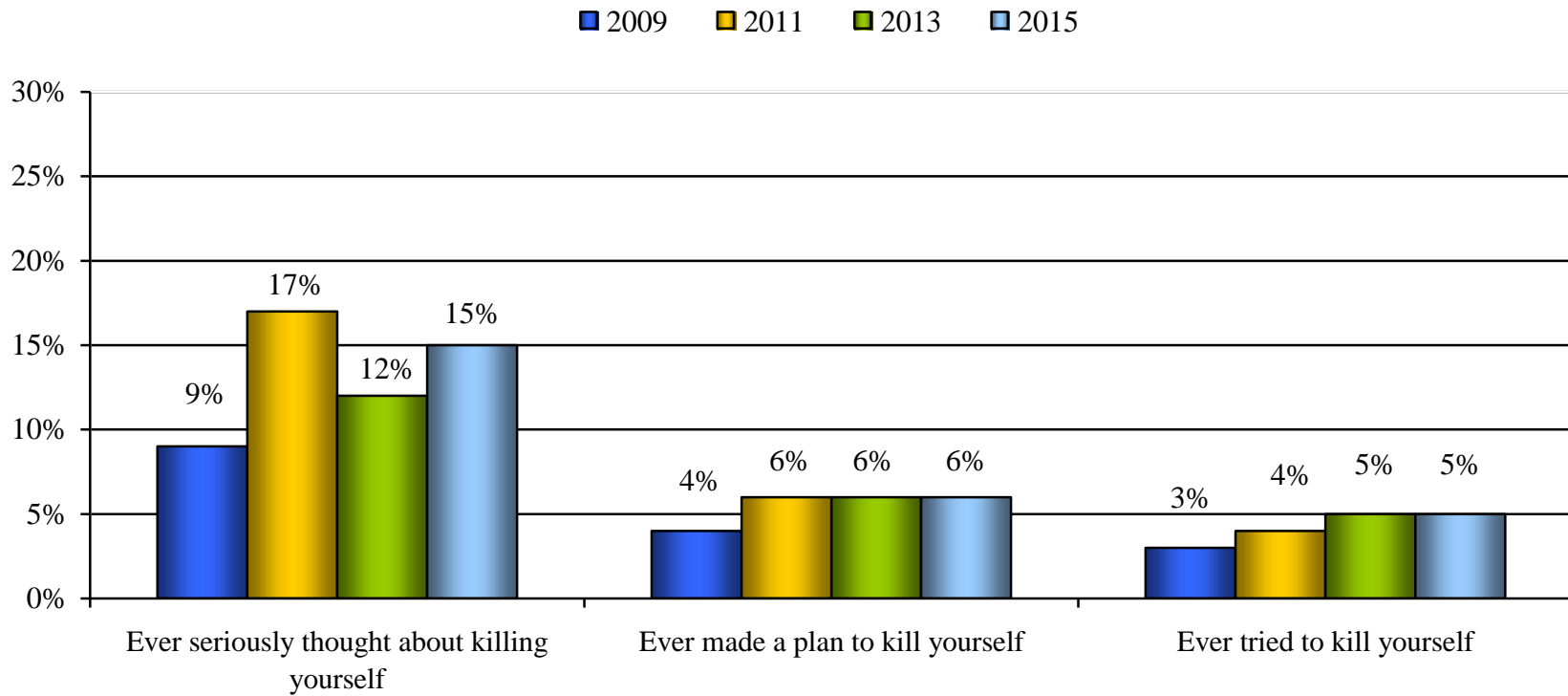
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2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS**



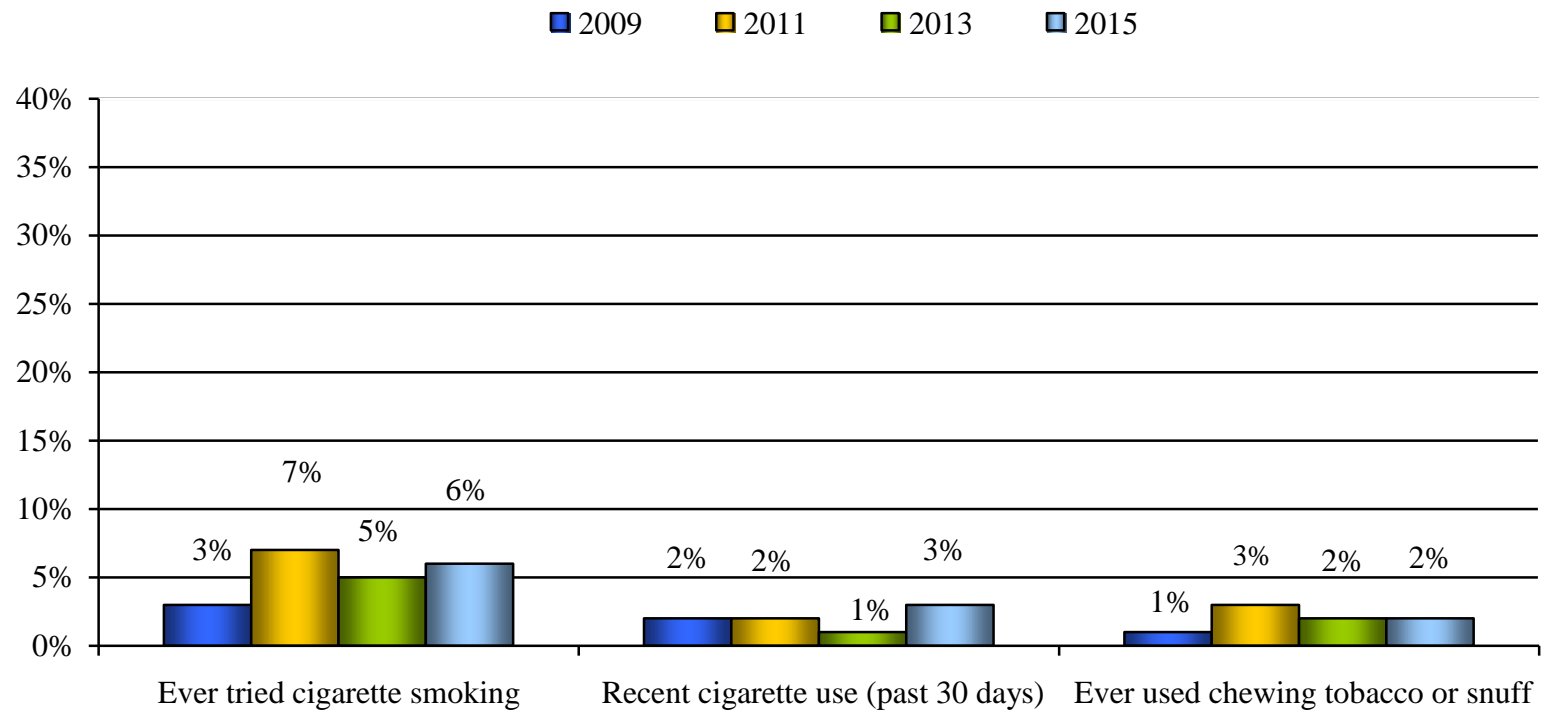
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SUICIDE**



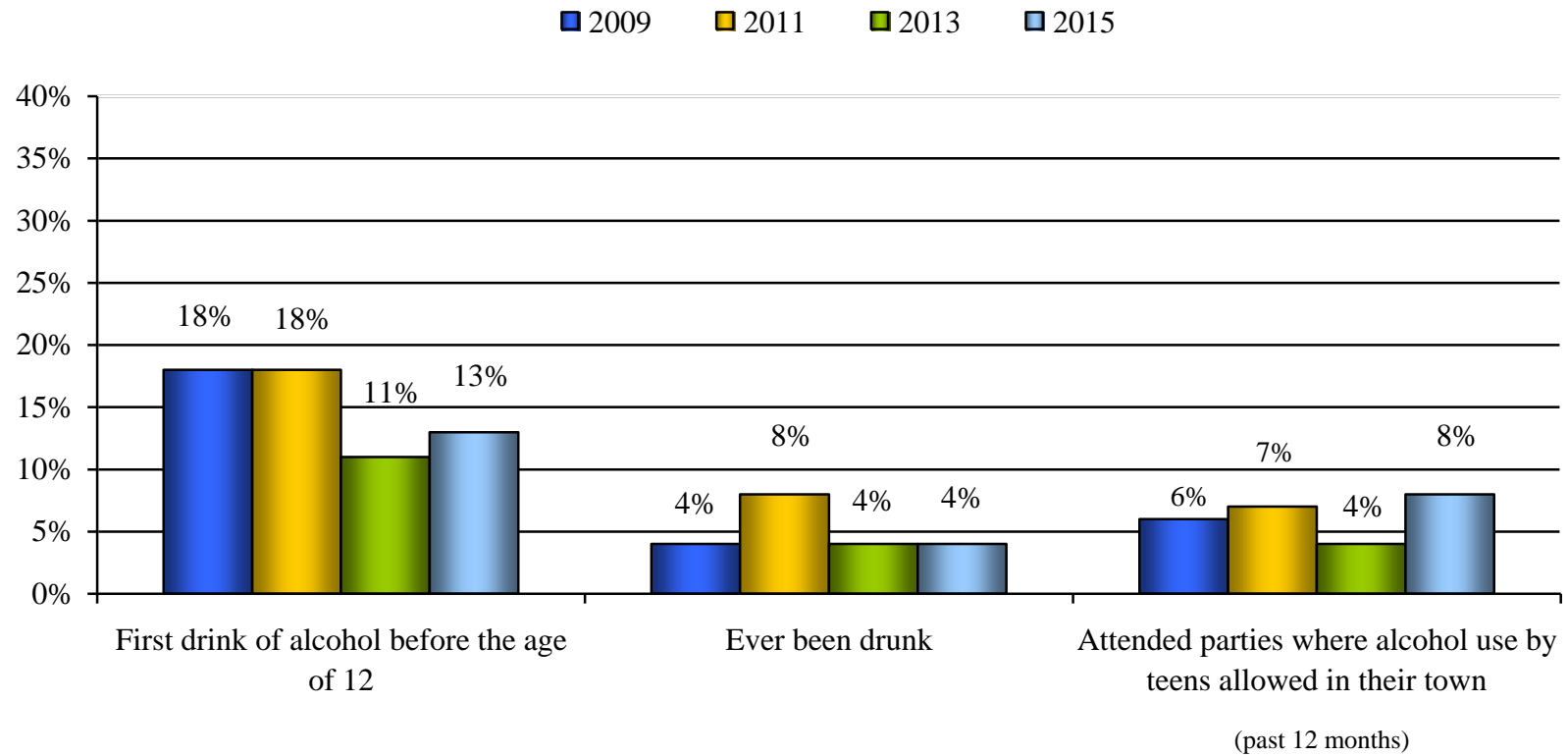
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**TOBACCO USE**



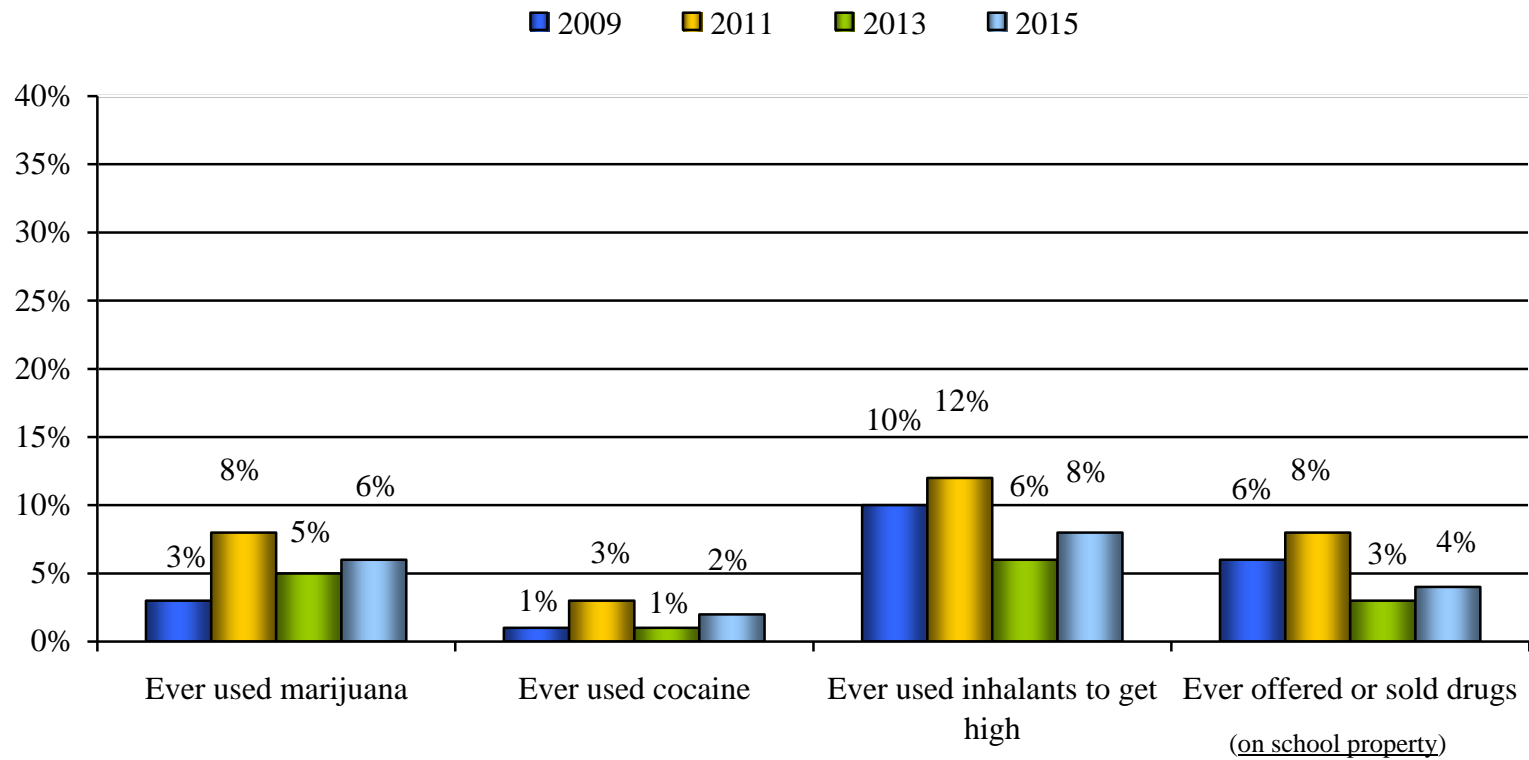
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**ALCOHOL USE**



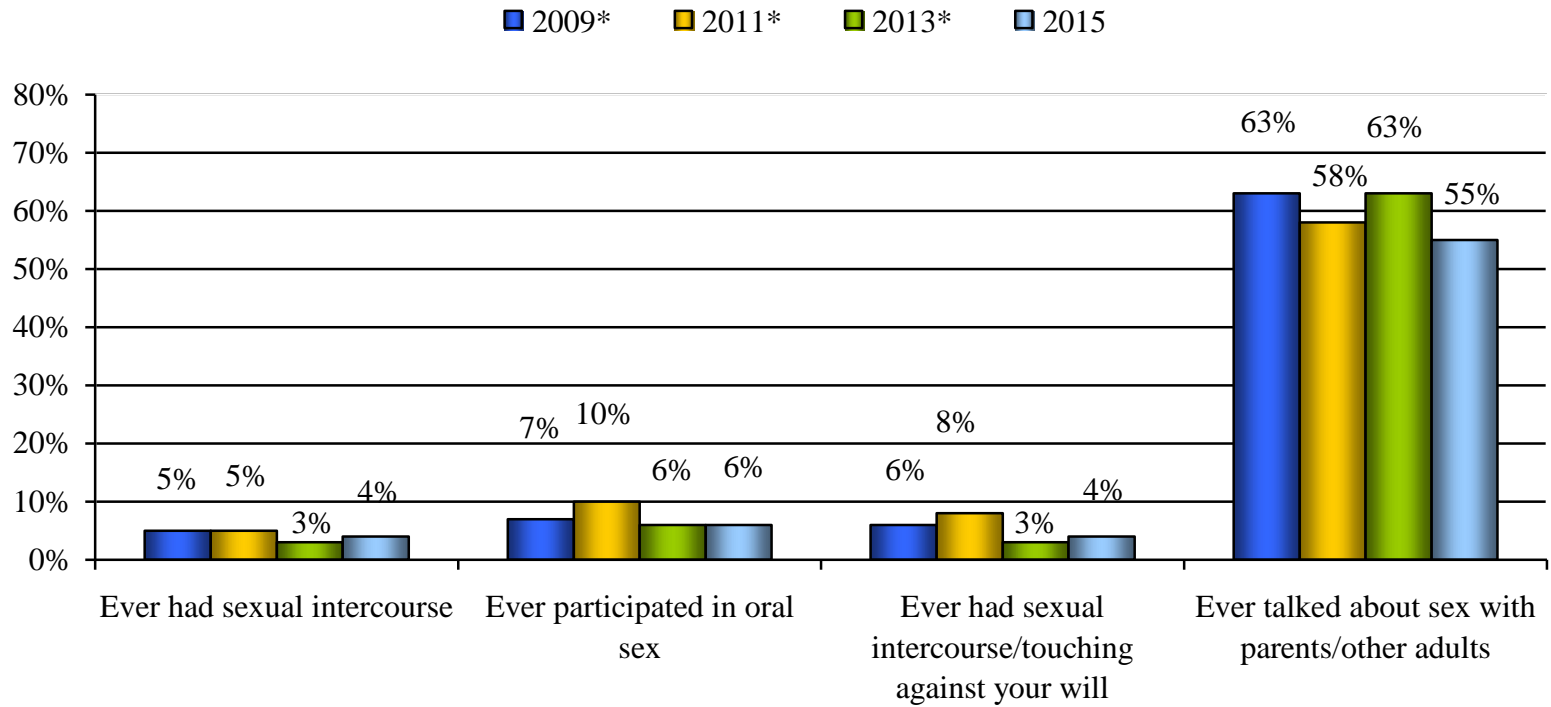
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**ILLEGAL DRUG USE**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**

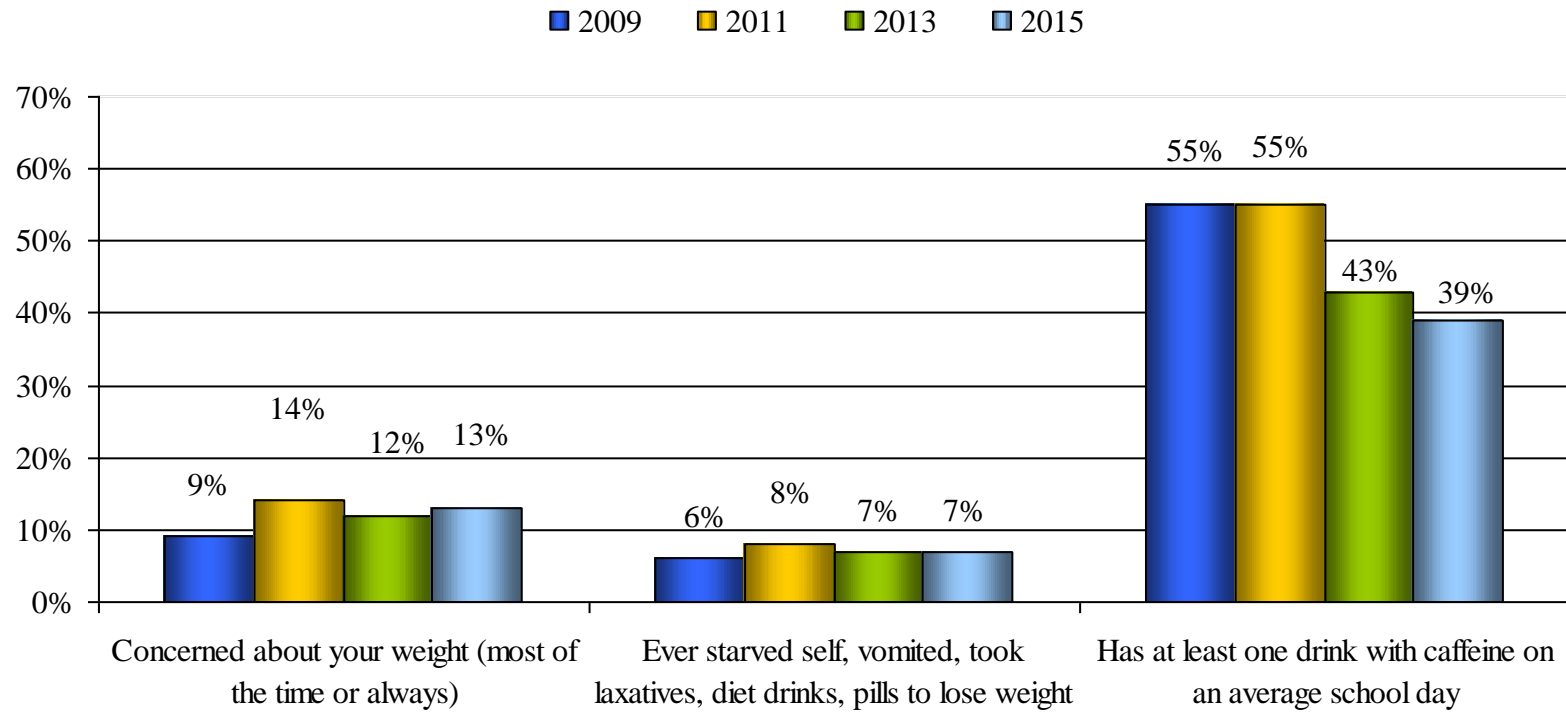


\*Grades 7 and 8 only



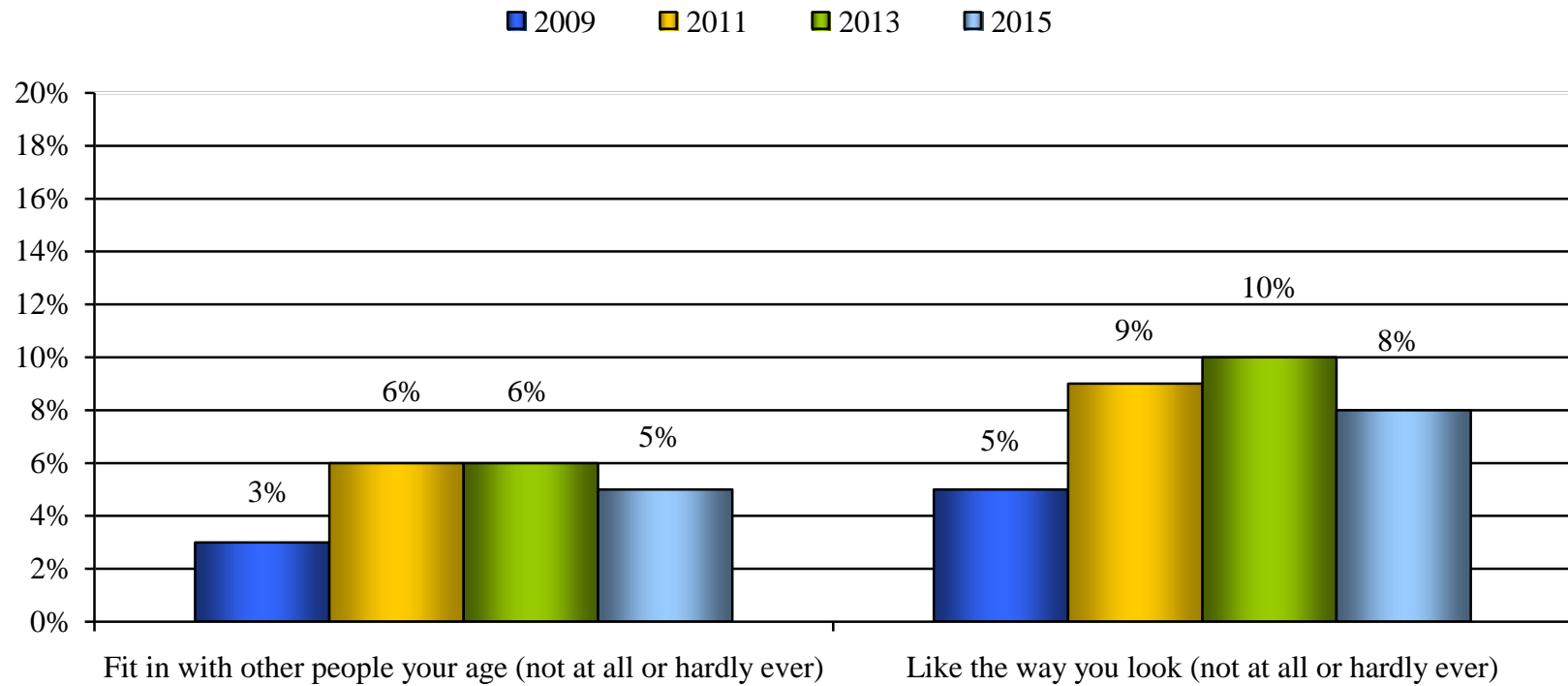
**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**DIETARY BEHAVIOR**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**SELF-IMAGE**



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2015 YRBS  
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 (COMBINED)**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

